



## WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 22 MARCH 2017  
**LEAD OFFICER:** ZAFAR IQBAL, SENIOR POLICY OFFICER (WBC), PETER BRUINVELS, CIVILIAN MILITARY LIAISON ADVISOR (SCC)  
**SUBJECT:** ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE  
**AREA:** WOKING

### **SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, with Woking Borough Council signing on 1 November 2012. Following the signings, a countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board was established to implement actions under the Covenant across Surrey. At the same time Woking established a Military Covenant Advisory Panel to coordinate work across the Borough.

This report provides an update of activities undertaken since the last update was given to the committee in December 2015.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Woking Joint Committee is asked to note this report**

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report is for information only.

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

1.1 Surrey County Council signed a Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, and following this set up the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board (SCMPB). Woking Borough Council signed the Covenant on 1 November 2012 and established the Military Covenant Advisory Panel at the same time. Cllr Kingsbury continues to be Woking Borough Council's Armed Forces Champion as well as the Surrey Leaders representative on the countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board.

1.2 Since the last update to the Committee, the Ministry of Defence has rebranded the Armed Forces Covenant following extensive consultation. The new branding brings

together the Community Covenant, Corporate Covenant and the Armed Forces Covenant which all had separate logos and messages under one new Armed Forces Covenant logo and message:

*The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring those who serve, or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.*



1.3 Annex 1 sets out the key successes that have been achieved in Surrey under the Armed Forces Covenant over the last year. Set out below is an update on Woking as well as further information on countywide achievements which may be of particular interest to the Committee.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- a) The Military in Surrey is fully engaged with the work of both the Countywide Board and Woking Panel. At a Countywide level this support is provided by 11 Infantry Brigade, and at a Woking level it is provided through close working relationships with officers at ATC Pirbright and 27 Regt RLC based in Aldershot, both of which are represented on the Panel.

### **Key Woking Achievements:**

- b) Employer Recognition Silver Award was presented to the Leader of Woking Borough Council at HMS Victory in Portsmouth in recognition of the Council's work with the Forces community. Council staff has regularly participated in Sandhurst Leadership Challenge – a flagship programme organised by 11 Infantry Brigade and South East Reservists and Cadets Association (SERFCA).
- c) Skanska presentation to Armed Forces Champions in June 2016 to raise awareness with the business community of best practice in military – civilian relations.
- d) The Mayor and a number of Senior Council Officers took part in MOD BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) event at Sandhurst. The Council continues to participate in the forces national engagement with the BAME communities to promote diversity and cohesion.
- e) EXERCISE COMMONWEALTH SOLDIER 2016 - 11 Infantry Brigade and Headquarters South East hosted a battlefield tour to Ypres for members of Woking community to develop awareness and understanding of the modern Army and promote integration.
- f) Freedom March – Woking BC has granted the Freedom of the Borough to the Army Training Centre – Pirbright for their extensive support on promoting military – civilian engagement in the area. To celebrate the award a Freedom march will be held in Woking Town on St Georges Day (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017).
- g) Remembrance/Armed Forces Day – Both Army Training Centre – Pirbright and 27 Regiment RLC provided soldiers to participate.
- h) Woking Means Business – A breakfast presentation by a local Business (Skanska) on their mutually beneficial engagement with Armed Forces and a joint stall by

Woking BC and Surrey CC at the exhibition generated seven expression of interest in the Armed Forces Covenant from local businesses.

- i) South East Regional Employer Engagement Group , (SE REEG) – Woking BC is a member of this Group which provides advice to the military chain of command on engagement with employers in order to ensure that the interests of both Service personnel and their employers enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship that sustains the desired level of operational capability required by the Ministry of Defence.
- j) Peace Garden – a selection of engagement events is outlined below:
  1. Woking High School - Extensive cross –curriculum engagement with visits to the Garden and projects in poetry, art, history and citizenship etc. to raise awareness and understanding of pupils.
  2. International Heritage and Museums Conference, Lahore Pakistan – A presentation was given on the Role of the British Indian Army in WW1& WW2 and the Peace Garden in Woking.
  3. Buckingham University - produced a short video on the Peace Garden to be used for their MA Chaplaincy Course.
  4. International Military Chaplaincy Delegation – Hosted a delegation of senior military chaplains from nineteen countries in collaboration with Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Muslim Association..
  5. Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia - A visit by academics from KANZU Centre and possible collaborative work on raising awareness of the role of the Peace Garden on promoting international harmony.
  6. MBG Peace Garden ‘Tea Party’ – In collaboration with British Futures , Woking High School and Horsell Common Preservation Society a very successful event promoting community cohesion was delivered with many nationally prominent guests participating e.g. Baroness Warsi, Baroness Sheehan, Imam Hafiz Hashmi and Tim Winters.
- k) Meeting with Head teachers of Brookwood, Bisley and Pirbright in collaboration with Guildford BC and Surrey CC on issues relating to Forces children and possibility of Covenant funding to recruit a home -school link worker to support the forces families children in all three schools.
- l) Brookwood Last Post Association – The Council has supported the Association over the year to recruit new members and raise awareness in the community to attend their services at Brookwood Military Cemetery.
- m) Surrey and Woking have been **recognised nationally** for their work implementing the Covenant. Surrey CC and Woking BC were two of just 11 authorities across the UK interviewed as part of research carried out by the Local Government Association and Forces in Mind Trust to look at key elements required to successfully implement the Covenant within a local authority. The resulting report, which included a Surrey case study, set out the key infrastructure required was reported to the Local Government Association Conference and the National Covenant Conference.

- n) Reservist Recruitment – Woking BC working with Farnham Army Reserve Centre (3PWRR) and Woking Shopping, a recruitment drive was held at the Peacock Shopping Centre over three weeks, generating twenty-six enquiries.

**Key Surrey-wide Achievements:**

- o) Surrey's highest profile achievement from last year was being awarded the MoD **Employer Recognition Gold Award**, which was presented to the Chairman of Surrey County Council by HRH Duke of Cambridge at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 12 October 2016. Surrey was one of only 22 employers from all parts of Great Britain to be awarded Gold. The Scheme is designed to recognise and thank employers who are supporting Armed Forces personnel and their families.
- p) Surrey County Council has developed excellent **cross border relationships** with neighbouring councils including Kent County Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council, Medway Council and Brighton and Hove Council and has established a South East Regional Cross Border Working Group, comprising both officers and councillors from councils and the NHS. This has enabled an effective mechanism for ensuring consistency of approach, and sharing expertise developed by individual authorities. This Group has also submitted an **application for £280k** to the Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Covenant Fund to promote understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community within public authorities and other sectors to ensure the Covenant is embedded in mainstream service delivery through sharing and building on best practice. The funding will be used to develop training packages for staff and councillors, increased online information, and referral pathways. The outcome of the bid will be known at the end of March 2017.
- q) To ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community contacting the County Council receive excellent customer service, training has been provided to officers within the Surrey County Council **Contact Centre** on the types of issues facing the Armed Forces Community and other sources of support available should the County Council not be the most appropriate organisation to assist. As a large proportion of the clients that Adult Social Care engage with may be veterans, an officer within the Adult Social Care Contact Centre has been nominated as the designated Armed Forces Lead for the Team to promote awareness and best practice.
- r) In partnership with the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board, Surrey Young Carers established a new post in September 2016 to support the needs of **military young carers**. Young carers in military families have different responsibilities from other young carers in that they may be caring for a parent who has been injured in service or has post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as potentially caring for a parent or a sibling. As many military families live away from their extended family and support networks, these young carers often face more caring responsibilities than their non-military peers. For a variety of cultural reasons, including the need for frequent relocation and the tendency to try to look after themselves, they tend not to readily reach out for external support, resulting in young carers in military families being harder to identify.
- s) Surrey facilitates regular meetings of the **Task Force Commanders with the Armed Forces Champions** and Covenant Officers. The aim of these meetings is to share best practice and encourage wider networking. The model has been endorsed by 11 Brigade and duplicated by Hampshire County Council.

- t) Since the new **Armed Forces Covenant Fund** was launched in spring 2015, Surrey has been successful in bringing in a further £121,127 of MoD funding into the County for eight projects, including:
- extended early intervention and support at Brookwood and Pirbright Children's Centre
  - a programme of adult learning in the Deepcut and Pirbright area
  - support for ex-service personnel in the criminal justice system
  - IT resources for Blackdown Pre-School
  - A multi-purpose exhibition vehicle for the Trench Experience
  - An integration project for the Gurkha community in Woking via the Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum
  - Funding to improve integration across all service providers to ensure that military carers have access to the same support as the civilian population
  - Equipment for the Welfare House at Pirbright Barracks
- u) Surrey facilitated the annual **Surrey Covenant Conference** held last year at RLC Deepcut on 15 November 2016. Feedback has been highly positive and delegates welcomed the range of presentations as well as the opportunity for discussions via a number of workshops.

### **3. OPTIONS:**

3.1 This report is for information.

### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 The Local Committee chairmen received an update on 31 January 2017.

### **5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 There are no financial implications of the forward programme.

### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT:**

6.1 There are no significant risk management implications arising from this report.

### **7. LOCALISM:**

7.1 11 Infantry Brigade have implemented the concept of Task Force Commanders, where a Commanding Officer of a Surrey Regiment are linked with a particular borough or district council area to work closely together on issues of mutual concern. Woking has been linked with 27 Regt RLC based in Aldershot. The Brigade Commander has also appointed Peter Bruinvels (SCC) as his and the Brigade's Armed Forces Champion to link in locally.

### **8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 The aim of the Armed Forces Covenant is to ensure that the armed forces community are not disadvantaged by their service.

**9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report
Human Resource/Training and Development	No significant implications arising from this report

**10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

**11. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

11.1 Officers supporting the Surrey Board and the Woking Panel will continue to further promote the work of the Community and Corporate Covenant in Woking.

11.2 Members are asked to act as ambassadors locally to help promote links to the armed forces community and to promote the covenant within local businesses.

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**Consulted:**

Local Committee Chairmen, Woking Military Advisory Panel

**Borough Portfolio Holder**

Councillor John Kingsbury

**County Council Cabinet Member**

Mr Richard Walsh, Cabinet Member

**Annexes:**

SCMPB – Armed Forces Covenant Successes 2016/17

**Sources/background papers:**

None